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AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
OPENING OF A NEW
MISSION TO THE INDIANS
OF THE
DIOCESE OF HURON,
CANADA.

E. F. Wilson.

SARNIA :
PRINTED AT THE "OBSERVER" STEAM JOB PRESS.
1869.

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"If this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God it cannot be overthrown."

SOME MAY PERHAPS TAKE UP THIS LITTLE pamphlet to read, who in their snug English homes, surrounded on all sides by civilization and cultivation, know little about the Red Man of this Western World, or of his forest home: others, on the other hand, may trace through these pages, who are well acquainted with the gaunt figure and sober face of the Indian, as he stands listlessly in the street, or moves slowly along the side-walk, followed by his wife in blanket cloak, well laden with baskets and mats for sale.

In the pages which follow, an attempt will be made to unfold before the reader a plain, simple, and ungarished picture, representing the opening out of a new mission to the Chippeway Indians of Western Canada. In as few words as possible, it will be shown how under God's blessing the work has been already commenced, what has been the progress since commencement, and what are the plans for future work. The humble trust of the writer is, that many who peruse these few pages, whether in this country or the old country, when they find what under God's good providence has already been effected, and how much still remains to be done, may

be animated with a desire to aid in this holy cause, and to seek the welfare of these poor Indians.

This new Mission has been set on foot by the great parent Society in England, the CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY. Its object is two fold. (1) To minister to the welfare of those Indians who, living in the midst of a comparatively civilized country, and most of them bearing the name of Christian, have hitherto been left neglected and almost uncared for by our Church. And (2) in addition to this, to prepare a way by which the precious truths of the gospel may, *through native agency*, be disseminated upwards and onwards, through the regions of the North and West, until the borders of the Red River Settlement are reached.

To meet this first object, there are certainly some drawbacks in the way. The Indians are scattered; they have large tracts of bush-land set apart by Government in different parts of the country for their exclusive use, and on these tracts of land, or Reserves, as they are generally called, they live in small bands; two hundred on one Reserve, three or four hundreds on another, eight hundred on another, and so on. The difficulty is to know how to supply these small bands of Indians with the means of grace and education, without incurring too great an outlay. The large Reserves are already supplied with missionaries who are working zealously and earnestly among their people; but the small Reserves have been hitherto almost entirely neglected. The plan that has been adopted for carrying out this object is as follows: A spot has been selected where the Indians are tolerably numerous for headquarters; here a small church and a mission-house have been built; and at the other Indian settlements, cate-

chists are in the course of time to be appointed, who shall be under the superintendence, and in constant correspondence with the missionary: and these out-stations the missionary will himself visit at stated seasons, and superintend the work.

With regard to the second object, time must of course elapse before much can be accomplished. The first thing is to secure a firm footing at headquarters, to gain the general good will and confidence of the Indians, and to let them know that we really seek their welfare. A small church and mission-house have already been built, and it is hoped that before long a school may also be erected; after a time, under God's guidance and direction, the way may perchance be opened for the erection of a Training Institution for native teachers and catechists, and thus the means will be afforded for carrying out the second object of this new mission.

Let me now endeavor to give the reader a passing sketch of our mission in this the day of its infancy. On the banks of the broad River St. Clair, near the Town of Sarnia, Canada West, is an Indian Settlement, extending over some seven or eight thousand acres, and occupied by some four hundred or more Chippeway Indians. The shore of the river is fringed with their little fishing shanties, netting apparatus, and canoes; and back from the river extends the wild bush for many a mile, dotted here and there with little log huts, each with a small clearing round it, cultivated more or less, according to the industry and perseverance of the owner. The *bush* is wild in the extreme:—deep-rutted wheel tracks the only apology for roads, these often rendered impassable by fallen trees, or in rainy weather lying completely under water. On all sides rise gaunt and

naked stems, spreading out their huge arms over the saplings and underwood which, sprouting up beneath, form a forest of themselves.

It is on this spot,—high up on the bank of the beautiful St. Clair River,—that the first signs of this new mission are now to be seen: a neat little church, with four wooden walls, a tiny bell tower, and five little windows; and by its side the mission-house, a comfortable eight-roomed wooden cottage, with stable behind, and a plot of bare ground in front, intended one day to become a model garden.

Here are the headquarters of the new mission,—a mission destined in the course of time, with God's blessing, and under His special guidance, not only to strike its own roots deep into the soil that has received it, but, like the strawberry plant, to strike out its runners, and form new plants on every side, to take root and bear fruit also.

Our progress so far is certainly a matter of deep thankfulness to God, who has thus opened our way and made plain our path. We came to this mission on the 15th of August last (1868), and at that time had only a little log-hut to hold our services in, and a congregation of from fifteen to twenty; but warm hearts and willing hands can with God's blessing accomplish great things. Indians set to work with their hands, and white friends contributed freely from their purses, and the result is, that we now have our comfortable little church and snug parsonage, within six months,—built, finished, and in use. When we commenced to build in the middle of September last, we had not a penny to meet the expense; now, under God's blessing, nearly the whole is paid for, and money is still coming in.

The church is small, only 32 x 20 in size, but it will seat one hundred people comfortably, and this is quite as large a congregation as we have any reason to expect for the present; if our numbers increase, it may be necessary at a future day to make some enlargement. In building it, the Indians of our own congregation assisted to the utmost of their power; they cut down trees, squared them, and prepared them for the frame-work of the building, and then assisted in the raising. And not only to our own Indians have we been indebted, but brethren from a neighboring mission have also contributed their offering. On the day our little church was opened, there came a Chief from Walpole Island, bearing in his hand the gift of his people to the new mission. The little bag of money was opened, and was found to contain the handsome sum of \$10 (about £2). It is certainly a cause of great encouragement to see how earnest our Indians are in the work, and how anxious to aid in the spread of Christ's kingdom. Their hearts are large enough to look beyond the limits of their own territory, and to contribute their mite also to the benefit of the mission work at large. A missionary meeting was held among them in January, at which between thirty and forty Indians were present. At the close of the meeting a collecting card was taken round, and each put down his name for the amount he would give,—some a half-dollar, some one dollar, some even more. The whole sum, when added up, amounted to upwards of thirty dollars, all of which has since been paid in.

But while speaking on the one hand of the earnestness of certain Indians in the cause of Christ, it must not be concealed that on the other hand there is much

vice and wickedness prevalent among the people at large; not only among the pagans, but among those also who profess to be Christians. The close proximity of a town affords a great temptation to many of them to indulge in drink, and it is sad to find how in many of the little log-huts disorder and poverty tell the sad tale of drunkenness and vice. The dark cloud, however, is not without its silver fringe, for we are already able thankfully to record the commencement of reform in more than one drinking Indian. It is satisfactory to see how, after being seriously spoken to, they do endeavor usually to turn a new leaf; they listen attentively, and appear to feel the importance of what is said to them, even though they may be again overcome by temptation. An Indian will never avoid being spoken to; there is no slinking away into a corner when the missionary comes round on his pastoral visit; an Indian would scorn to do this, even though he expected to be met with reproof.

Our ordinary routine of work among the people consists at present of two services every Sunday in our little church, a Bible class and Sunday school; and on the week day a prayer meeting, which is held at one or another of the Indians' log-huts every Friday afternoon.

Then in addition to our Sarnia mission, we have an out-station thirty miles distant, called Kettle Point, to which a visit is paid once a month. At this station there are about one hundred Indians, and we have just settled a native catechist among them, who conducts service on the Sunday, and teaches school during the week. There is at present no regular school-house, and the children are taught in a little temporary building, which is very small. The Indians, however, are quite

stirred up to the work, and are at the present time cutting down trees with which to build a school. The two principal men at this place are still pagans, but they take a lively interest in our efforts for their good, and have already presented their families for baptism. It is hoped that their hearts may soon be so influenced by God's Holy Spirit, that they will themselves renounce paganism and become Christians.

A sufficiently full account has now been given of the commencement of this mission, and the progress which, under God's blessing, it has made. It remains now only to advert as shortly as possible, to the work which is still in prospect, and to appeal earnestly for repeated and increased help in this our object, so that we may not be straitened or impeded in our efforts for lack of funds, but may, with God's help and the kind assistance of friends, go on and accomplish the work which has been so happily commenced.

One of our first objects in view is to erect a school for the children. There is already a small log building where school is held, but the attendance, we are told, is very irregular, and all our people are of course anxious that we should have a school in connection with the new mission. The ground for it, we have no doubt, will be forthcoming whenever we may decide to commence building.

To aid the Indians in their *farming*, is another object. If they could be taught to farm systematically, and to make the most of their land, they might soon be raised to a very respectable position in society, for they have many advantages over their white neighbors. They hold their own land free from all rent, taxes, and other

incumbrances; each family has a farm of from 40 to 80 acres; and in addition to this there is an annuity from Government of \$9 to each individual. At the present time their land is for the most part sadly neglected; the Indians cut cordwood and sell it: they fell the black ash, and strip it up for their women to make baskets of; they make maple sugar in the early spring, and in the summer and fall they are busy with their fishing. By these means, together with hunting deer and occasionally working out as laborers, they gain their livelihood. In the way of farming, they do little beyond just ploughing an acre or two round their dwellings, and planting it with Indian corn and potatoes, or perchance with a small oat or wheat crop. At a future day we hope to see well cultivated farms, clean, respectable houses, and neat gardens around them. It would perhaps be an encouragement and help to the Indians if a superintending farm bailiff could be located on the Reserve, who would have the supervision of the farms, give instruction to the people, and aid them in making improvements. Perhaps if at a future day a training Institution is established, some plan of this sort may be devised in connection with it.

Then to look beyond our own immediate neighborhood, to these other out-stations which have been already alluded to, there is certainly a vast work as yet to be accomplished. At Kettle Point the Indians are already setting to work to build a school-house, and a dwelling for their Teacher. They will do what they can in the erection of these buildings, and after that we must help them to the best of our power.

Indians, too, at more distant stations, have already heard of the opening of this new mission, and the pro-

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ject for its gradual extension, and the distant cry is heard from them, of "Come over and help us!" About sixty miles from our station is a settlement of some three hundred Delaware Indians; this mission has been principally hitherto in the hands of the Moravian brethren, but the people have had occasional visits from a Church teacher, and a considerable number of them are now anxious for a Church mission to be established among them. The Chief of the tribe recently sent the following communication on behalf of his people:

TO THE REV. E. F. WILSON, SARNIA:

We, the members of the Church of England, at Moravian Town, beg to drop a few lines to you by this opportunity. We have heard that you come from the other side of the Big Waters, and have settled among the Indians as a missionary to them. We are thankful to God, that He in His infinite goodness and mercy hath inclined your heart to come from such a long distance to preach the everlasting and glorious Gospel of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, to the poor Indians, and also to act as their shepherd, in watching over them, and administering to them their spiritual wants. We have also been informed that you have already accomplished much among our countrymen. We rejoice, dear brother, on being informed of this, and we wish you God speed in your labors of faith and love. We understand that it is your intention to extend your mission to other Indian settlements. We would be most happy indeed to be included in your mission, and we moreover desire to be under the care of the Church Society in England, under whose direction we understand you are laboring; for then we think our spiritual

wants would be better supplied. We wish also to inform you regarding our Catechist and Interpreter, who has been laboring faithfully among us for about two years without any salary, but still he has fulfilled his duties satisfactorily to us so far. We therefore earnestly desire that something may be done for him. We have a little frame church in which we have morning services, and we hold our evening services in a school-house, on account of being situated on the middle of the Reserve, and convenient to all. Hoping to see you in our midst before long proclaiming the blessed gospel to us, we remain, Rev'd and dear Sir,—Very faithfully yours,

**CHIEF PHILIP JACOB,
JOHN SHEBOO (CHURCHWARDEN),
EDW'D WHITEYE (INTERPRETER),
And sixty-four others.**

January 16th, 1869.

It will be seen from this letter, and from the foregoing remarks, that there is a great work yet to be done. If all these cut-stations are one by one taken up, and Catechists placed over them, it will necessarily involve a large outlay in providing suitable buildings for them all. A furnished school-house and a Teacher's residence will in each case be indispensable. The Society undertakes to pay the salaries of all persons employed in the work, and to make grants also, if necessary, for building purposes; but to meet the bulk of the expense incurred in building, we look around at large, and ask every person whose heart is warm, and whose hands are willing, to help us in our efforts to spread among these interesting people the glorious news of the gospel.

E. F. W.

CONTRIBUTIONS

RECEIVED TOWARDS THE ERECTION OF CHURCH
AND PARSONAGE FOR THE ST. CLAIR MISSION.

COLLECTED IN ENGLAND.

Mrs. Moody,	£5	0	0
Rev'd H. Hayward,	0	10	0
Sir Capel Brooke,	5	0	0
Mrs. Leader,	1	1	0
Mr. T. D. Westall,	2	0	0
Lady Buxton,	3	0	0
Mrs. Browne,	2	0	0
Mr. Hanbury,	10	0	0
Miss Marcum,	5	0	0
Mrs. Rankin,	1	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Argyles,	0	10	0
Miss Calder,	0	10	0
Miss L. Cattley,	1	0	0
Bible Woman's Collection,	0	5	5
Mr. Woodward,	5	0	0
Miss Mills,	5	0	0
Mr. J. Sperling,	2	0	0
Rev. D. Wilson,	10	0	0
Rev. D. F. Wilson,	5	0	0
Mrs. Green,	2	0	0
Miss Hankin,	1	1	0
Miss Grammer,	0	10	0
Miss Sherring, (collected),	1	0	0
Mr. Hooper,	5	0	0
Mr. G. Friend,	2	2	0
Mrs. Sandos,	2	2	0
Lady F. Watson,	1	0	0
Mr. James Elgar,	3	0	0
Mrs. Elgar,	1	0	0
Mr. J. E. Elgar,	1	0	0
Carried forward,	£83	11	5

Brought forward,	£83	11	0
Mr. Watkins,	2	0	0
Mr. Cropper,	5	0	0
Rev. M. Latham,	5	0	0
Mrs. Richardson,	1	0	0
Mrs. Lewis,	5	0	0
Mr. Powell,	2	2	0
Miss Finch,	0	4	0
Rev. C. Pratt,	1	0	0
Mrs. Soames,	5	0	0
Rev. D. and Mrs. Hinderer (Ibadan),	2	0	0
Miss Pratt,	0	5	0
Mr. Adams,	0	5	0
	£107	14	5
Received of this amt., £100; (\$484.44c.),	£100	00	0
Balance not yet transmitted,	£7	14	5

COLLECTED IN CANADA.

Rev. J. G. R. Salter,	\$5	00
Rev. Andrew Jamieson,	5	00
Miss Lee,	5	00
Miss Saunders,	3	0
A lady, per Mr. Salter,	1	0
Result of Lectures delivered at Sarnia, Strathroy, Forest and Widder, (expenses deducted)	20	32
Miss Woodside,	2	00
Collected by Miss Woodside,	22	00
Rev. J. and Mrs. Brock,	2	00
In small sums,	1	03
Collection at Sarnia Church,	20	70
Mrs. Wolhaupter,	1	00

COLLECTION IN LONDON.

The Lord Bishop of Huron, and Mrs. Cronyn,	5	00
The Very Rev., the Dean,	5	00
Rev. G. M. Innes,	1	00

Collections in Canada carried forward, \$99 05

11 0	Brought forward,.....	\$99 05
0 0	Rev. R. H. Starr,.....	1 00
0 0	Rev. J. Halpin,	2 00
0 0	Collection at Huron College Chapel,	8 25
0 0	Mr. Barnard,.....	1 00
0 0	Messrs. Smith and Chapman,.....	1 00
2 0	Mr. W. J. Smith,	1 00
4 0	Mr. Briant,.....	2 00
0 0	Mr. Long,.....	1 00
0 0	Mr. E. W. Harris,.....	1 00
0 0	Mr. V. Cronyn,.....	2 00
5 0	Mr. Siddons,.....	0 50
5 0	Mr. F. W. Thomas,.....	5 00
7 14 5	Mr. Kingsley,.....	1 00
0 00 0	Mr. W. Henderson,.....	2 00
7 14 5	Mr. H. Simpson, ...	2 50
	Mr. H. Strathy,.....	1 00
	Mr. W. McDonough,.....	1 00
	Mr. E. A. Taylor,.....	1 00
\$5 00	Mr. F. Rowland,.....	1 00
5 00	Mr. C. T. Hanson,.....	0 50
5 00	Mr. Jewell,.....	0 50
3 0	Mr. E. W. Hyman,.....	2 00
1 0	Mr. G. J. Goodhue,.....	2 00
	Mr. Taylor,.....	2 00
	J. A.,.....	0 50
20 32	Mr. C. Hunt,.....	2 00
2 00	Mr. Dampier,.....	1 00
22 00	Mr. T. Millar,.....	1 00
2 00	T. Beattie & Co.,.....	4 00
1 03	Mr. Jackson,.....	0 50
20 70	Mr. B. D. Mitchell,.....	1 00
1 00	Colonel Shanly,.....	1 00
	Mr. Hamilton,.....	1 00
5 00	Dr. Phillips,.....	0 50
5 00	Mr. Denton,.....	5 00
1 00		
\$99 05	Collections in Canada carried forward,.....	\$158 80

Brought forward,.....	\$158 80
Mrs. Coombes,.....	1 00
Mr. J. B. Strathy,.....	1 00
Collected by Rev. G. M. Innes,.....	8 21
Lieutenant Gehle,.....	5 00
Mr. Linsdell,.....	1 00
Mr. B. Shaw,.....	2 00
Messrs. Labatt & Co.,.....	1 00
Mrs. Flood,.....	5 00
Rev. E. F. Wilson,.....	30 00
	\$213 01

GRANTS.

By the Church Missionary Society, £100,.....	\$486 00
By the Christian Knowledge Society, £10,....	48 30
By the Bishop of Huron, from a fund in hand for building purposes,	30 00
	\$564 30

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE INDIANS.

The Indians of Walpole Island, a sum of \$10, but some being in American currency, only equal to	9 00
Value of the Sarnia Indians' voluntary work, as estimated by the Contractor,	78 75
Value of labor in fixing pews,.....	7 00
	\$94 75

158 80

1 00

1 00

8 21

5 00

1 00

2 00

1 00

5 00

30 00

\$213 01

\$486 00

48 30

30 00

\$564 30

9 00

78 75

7 00

\$94 75

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT.

RECEIVED.

Collected in England,	\$484 44
Collected in Canada,	213 01
Grants,	564 30
Contributed by the Indians, either in money or labor,	94 75
Deficiency,	142 47
	<u>\$1498 97</u>

PAID.

Cost of framing, building, painting, and furnishing the church,	\$464 25
Cost of framing, building, and painting mission-house, and fitting it with a well, wood-shed, &c.,	955 72
Banking round ditto,	14 00
Cost of building a stable,	65 00
	<u>\$1498 97</u>

THE SAME ACCOUNT IN ENGLISH MONEY.

RECEIVED.

Collected in England,	£100 0 0
Collected in Canada,	44 0 0
Grants,	116 16 0
Contributed by Indians,	19 10 0
Deficiency,	29 0 0
	<u>£309 0 0</u>

PAID.

Cost of building the church,	£96 0 0
Cost of building the house, shed, &c.,	196 10 0
Cost of banking do.,	3 0 0
Cost of stable,	13 10 0
	<u>£309 0 0</u>

The deficiency of £29, as shewn in the foregoing account will, it is hoped, be very nearly met by collections already made among friends in the old country, but not yet transmitted.

In addition to the amount already mentioned, we have also received also a sum of £10 collected by Miss Bazett, Reading, for a *Harmonium*, and £10 collected by Mrs. Bateman, Margate, for a *Church Bell*.

It is for our new projects that we are now principally appealing for money : a school and master's house to be built on the St. Clair Reserve, and the same at Kettle Point.

The following ladies will kindly receive donations on behalf of this mission.

IN ENGLAND.

MRS. LEMANN, Langford Vicarage, Lechlade.

MISS BAZETT, Springfield, Reading.

MISS WILSON, 9 Barnsbury Park, London N.

IN CANADA.

MRS. CRONYN, See House, London.

MRS. BLAKE, Humewood, Toronto.

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